

Questions & Answers

Chinese Drywall

Why is Chinese drywall in the news?

Drywall (gypsum board, wallboard, plasterboard or sheetrock) is a common building material that is made up of a layer of gypsum, a naturally occurring mineral pressed between two thick sheets of paper. Some drywall imported from China has gypsum with higher sulfur content than drywall manufactured in the United States. High-sulfur drywall can give off sulfur gases that corrode or pit copper coils in air conditioning units, copper wiring, plumbing, and other metal building products.

Where was Chinese drywall shipped?

Chinese drywall was imported in quantity after Hurricane Katrina. Consequently, it has been found most often in homes built or remodeled in 2006 or 2007. Florida and Louisiana account for 85 percent of complaints while Mississippi, Alabama and Virginia account for another 10 percent.

Was Chinese drywall shipped to Missouri?

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which has been leading the federal investigation, small amounts of Chinese drywall are believed to have been sold in Missouri. To date, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has not received any consumer complaints regarding Chinese drywall. The CPSC and a Local Public Health Agency have received a handful of inquiries or complaints from Missouri residents.

How do you know if you have Chinese drywall in your house?

There are several indicators of Chinese drywall. If your home was built or remodeled after 2005 and have three of these five items, you may have Chinese drywall in your home.

- Presence of rotten egg or sulfur-like odors.
- Drywall with markings stamped on the back such as “Made in China.”
- Documented failure (often more than once) of the air conditioner evaporator coil located inside the air handling unit.
- Observed corrosion or pitting of copper pipes or wiring or other metal building products, such as faucets or metal fixtures. This may also look like black or sooty coatings on the metals.
- Confirmation by an outside building expert or professional for the presence of premature copper corrosion on un-insulated copper wires and/or air conditioner evaporator coils (inside the air handling unit).

What are the health symptoms and risks?

Since many consumers report that their symptoms lessen or go away when they are away from their home, but return upon re-entry, it appears that these symptoms are short-term and related to something within the home. These symptoms may include:

- Eye/skin irritation
- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent cough
- Runny/bloody nose
- Sinus infection
- Asthma attacks

What should you do if you have Chinese drywall and have these symptoms?

1. See your doctor if you believe that you have come in contact with imported drywall and are concerned about your symptoms. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site www.cdc.gov to learn more about drywall symptoms.
2. You should limit your time inside a house with strong odors. There is no recommendation at this time to move individuals from their homes.

How should you report a complaint involving drywall?

You can report a complaint involving drywall to the CPSC by filling out and submitting an online form at <https://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/drywall.aspx>. They may contact you by mail, phone or email for further details. In addition, you will be contacted to confirm the information you sent. Please provide as much information as possible. Your name, address, telephone number and email address are optional, but you can't be contacted without that information. You can also report a drywall complaint by calling toll-free at 1-800-638-2772 or by sending an e-mail to info@cpsc.gov. Please be advised that you may be contacted by one of CPSC's field investigators if they wish to obtain additional information about your report.

For More Information, Contact:

Consumer Product Safety Commission

<http://www.cpsc.gov/info/drywall/index.html>